

Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

Superior Court of Arizona ♥ Maricopa County Juvenile Division
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CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

THE FACE OF CPS IS CHANGING

by Laura Devany

The face of CPS is changing, and Noreen Sharp has something to do with it. It's hard to forget Noreen. She was the fireball who shot in and out of Juvenile Court and, as Court Administrator, got Model Court running and (among other things) helped CASA get a face lift. Now the Division Chief Counsel of the Child and Family Protective Division of the Attorney General's Office, Noreen is making some changes there, too.

Noreen was hand-picked by Attorney General Janet Napolitano to run this division where she is responsible for the coordination of the work of over 100 attorneys who represent the State of Arizona in matters related to child abuse and neglect, child support, welfare assistance, developmental disabilities, services for the blind, and protective services for adults. Her responsibilities encompass 30% of the Department of Economic Security (DES) and over 260 people. Her main focus is working with the Attorney General on her agenda of putting children and families first in Arizona.

In her first six months, Noreen reorganized how the AG's office serves DES, and changed management structure to help lawyers and staff do a better job. She strengthened the concept of "team" by creating more linkages between them. These have included weekly division management meetings, section and unit meetings, and the first division wide meeting in years. She also implemented the "Meet the Client's Client" program which promotes a better understanding of what families involved with DES have to go through. Employees of the Child and Family Protection Division are required to spend six hours a year visiting such places as group homes, food banks, detention centers, and the Arizona State Hospital.

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE

JUDY PEIRCE

Judy Peirce has been a CASA volunteer since 1992. She was selected for this month's profile because of her exemplary work on the five cases she's had during her tenure in Maricopa County. Her most interesting and challenging case was one she had from removal to adoption. She saw the children weekly and was instrumental in getting them adopted locally instead of being moved to a minimally adequate home out of state.

Judy worked with another child who was in seven foster homes in nine years. When she started the case, the child was diagnosed as borderline retarded and couldn't read. Judy helped teach this child to read, became her surrogate parent, and arranged for tutoring. Now in 5th grade, the child is only one grade level behind.

Judy has been in Phoenix since 1972. She is married and has two grown children and one grandchild. She used to raise and show Shetland Sheepdogs (Shelties) and now has six dogs of her own. She is currently retired and worked prior to her marriage at a private school in Massachusetts. She teaches swimming during the summer in her back yard to anyone from two years old and up.

Judy's commitment to children and advocacy is commendable and her contribution to our CASA program is greatly appreciated.

CASA Program Staff

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Leslie Blakley	506-4082
La Donna Moss	506-3930
Melissa Adomeit	506-3935
Shannon Childs	506-4415
Virginia Moore	506-4083



CASA Volunteer Mentors*

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Laura Devany/Nancy Molever - Co-Editors

The Face of CPS Is Changing - Continued from Page 1

Putting children and families first in Arizona means dealing with the problem. The problem is that children who are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect in Arizona are put in the foster care system for two to five years, and are often moved from home to home, with no permanency. Case managers are overloaded and can't devote enough time to helping these children toward permanency. Each case is reviewed at a minimum, every six months, often without substantive permanency planning due to workloads. Caseloads for attorneys are outrageous, and more and more dependencies are being filed every day. There are approximately 6,000 pending dependency cases in the current AG's office caseload and about 3,000 new dependency cases filed a year.

Through Model Court, the AG's office was successful in getting extra money for the next two years to help reduce current caseloads by half. This will mean no more waiting for severance, guardianship, or permanency planning. Partners in this effort are CPS, court appointed lawyers, the courts, CASAs, and Foster Care Review Board members. The key to its success is preparation. "Prepared cases settle," said Noreen. Going to Report and Reviews, FCRB, CPS staffings, and just knowing your cases is crucial. Mediation is another important factor. This is available for any contested issue -- dependency, adjudication, severance, and anyone (a CASA, for example) can request it.

What will CASAs see? Reduced caseloads, better prepared attorneys and caseworkers, and quicker roads to permanency for children. The goal is to reduce AG caseloads from the high end of 218 to 100 cases per attorney, and change the structure of the AG team. There are currently three teams starting the project which include one attorney, one paralegal and one case flow manager. They will meet regularly and divide duties to provide the best coverage of a dependency case.

The attorney will "do what attorneys do --paper and words," said Noreen. They will prepare complex motions and settlement agreements and give daily advice and counseling to the caseworkers. (Over 45% of their job is oral advice and counseling). The paralegal will work with CASAs, FCRB, go to CPS staffings, review paperwork, summarize information and pass it on to the CPS worker. The case flow manager will enter data in JOLTS and CHILDS, follow up on court orders, and prepare weekly plans for action on the case for months at a time. Each case will be worked minimally every two weeks. Noreen explained, "Things will be done pro-actively, before the court date, so there are meaningful things to say and maybe prevent the need for an appearance by finding a settlement."

The theme for this team model goes along with the one family, one judge idea --one legal team, one family, in conjunction with CPS units. "Partners working with partners," said Noreen, "with shared caseloads." These changes in CPS programs are also part of new Director John Clayton's plan. Noreen is working with him to create a linkage with the community and develop new pathways to do new things. She says he is a full partner in creating and designing these changes that will modernize the workings of CPS.

Noreen is a busy woman outside of work as well. She is also a Catholic nun who is approaching her 50th year on this planet. She is celebrating her journey into middle age with a hiking trip to the Yukon in Alaska. Seems good practice for the long-term goal she has for herself: "To have walked the earth gently and serviced people well."

Policy & Procedure Reminders

The following is a selection of policies and procedures dictated by the Arizona Supreme Court, Arizona Revised Statutes and the Arizona CASA Program:

Mandatory reporting of child abuse. Whenever a CASA volunteer suspects the safety and well-being of children are at risk, the volunteer shall report that information immediately to CPS. A volunteer shall not investigate any such concerns. (P&P, p.16). The hotline number is 1-888-767-2445.

No acceptance of gifts. No program staff, county coordinators, volunteers or any immediate family member should accept, solicit, or agree to accept any gift, favors or anything of value with the understanding that the official actions, decisions or judgment will be influenced. (P & P, p.3). *Questions about gifts intended for your CASA child should be individually addressed with your coordinator.

Confidentiality of case information. Information about a case may be shared **only** with interested parties to the case: CPS case managers/supervisors, child's attorney, child's therapists, Foster Care Review Boards, parents' attorney(s), parents (via their attorneys), and interested parties designated by the court. (P & P, p.8). **Note:** Violation of this constitutes a Class 2 misdemeanor.

Inactive status. Volunteer may be on inactive status for up to two years. If they wish to reactivate after more than one year, they must, at minimum, attend a two-day Orientation Training first. (P & P, p.3). -Cont. on page 5

CASA SPONSORED TRAINING

August 5, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Post Orientation Training - All new volunteers should attend the follow-up training to the basic CASA Orientation. Topics covered will include duties and responsibilities of a CASA volunteer, case planning and court report writing, Title 19 eligibility and Model Court. All volunteers are welcome to come as a review or to attend the Model Court portion beginning at 8:00 p.m. Location: Juvenile Court Southeast Facility, 1810 S. Lewis Street, Saguaro Room. Dinner will be provided. Please RSVP by August 2nd to the CASA Office at 506-4083.

CONFERENCES

August

18-20, 1999 CWLA National Kinship Care Conference; Honoring & Preserving Family Ties - Will provide an opportunity for those concerned about kinship families to join forces to improve outcomes for children placed in kinship families. Location: Sheraton Colony Square, Atlanta, GA. For more information contact Maryjane Link, 716-847-3743 or Gloria Patterson, 404-657-3457.

September 26-29, 1999, A Forum on Family Court: Exemplary Practice - Best practice in the entire range of family cases from Dependency to Delinquency, Status Offenses, Dissolution, Custody, Visitation, Support and Domestic Violence. Location: St. Louis, Missouri. For more information contact the Registrar at (775)784-6012. To take advantage of travel discounts contact Dorothy Gates at Travel Advisors, (800)458-8100 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

COMMUNITY SPONSORED EVENTS

August 4, Clinical Breakfast Series 1999 "Naturopathic Alternatives For Psychiatric Patient Care" - Sponsored by St. Luke's Behavioral Health Center. Location: Behavioral Health Center Auditorium, Phoenix. Cost: Free. For more information contact St. Luke's at 251-8616.

August 21, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - HEALTHY KIDS DAY - A free day of family fun at Phoenix Memorial Hospital. Childhood immunizations; Health screening; KidsCare application assistance. For more information, call 824-3215.

RESOURCES

The Arc of

Arizona, Inc., 5610 S. Central Avenue, Phoenix, 85040, (602)243-1787, 1-800-252-9054. The Arc provides statewide advocacy and support to adults and families of children with disabilities to help them get the information, services and opportunities they need. Other services include legislative advocacy, self-advocacy programs, residential monitoring of group homes, education advocacy to assist parents understand rights, guardianship services and conservatorship. Contact: Richard Young.

Arizona Alliance for the Mentally Ill - Young

Families Program, 2441 E. Fillmore Street, Phoenix, 85008, (602)244-8166, 1-800-626-5022. Family support groups and educational programs for families of children and adolescents with brain disorders. (Examples of brain disorders are: ADHD, major depression, anxiety disorders, autism, pervasive and developmental disorders, and Asperger's syndrome). The AAMI Mental Illness Information and Family Center houses speciality library of books, video and audio tapes lent free of charge. Contact: Sue Davis, Deborah Gross (Mental Illness Info), Sherry Howard (Young Families Program).

Arizona Center for Disability Law, 3839 N. Third Street, Suite 209, Phoenix, 85012, Voice or TDD (602)274-6287. The Center for Disability Law provides information, advocacy and legal assistance relating to persons with disabilities in the following areas: Special Education, Title XIX, ADA, Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitations. Contact: Intake.

Arizona Consortium for Children with Chronic

Illness (ACCCI), 521 W. Kaler, Phoenix, 85021, (602)997-2368. The Arizona Consortium for Children with Chronic Illness (ACCCI) works with state agencies and the state legislature educating them on the needs of families with children with a chronic illness and physical disabilities. They also assist individual families in obtaining needed services. A quarterly newsletter is

SUGGESTED READING

. Contact: Karen Van Epps.

The Best Interests of the Child: The Least Detrimental Alternative, by Joseph Goldstein, Albert J. Solnit, Sonja Goldstein, Anna Freud. This book applies ideas and materials from a trilogy of books written from 1973-1986: Beyond the Best Interest of the Child and In the

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Best Interests of the Child. The authors of these books have compiled a guide for those involved with the protection of children in the legal system and advise

those people to “put yourself in a child’s place.”

AUGUST 1999						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Clinical Breakfast for Psychiatric Patient Care Call: 251-8616	5 Post O.T. 6:00 p.m - 8:30 p.m. 1810 S. Lewis, Saguaro Room, RSVP by 8-2	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <i>Contact Logs are due in the CASA office.</i> <i>Fax: 506-5512</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21 Healthy Kids Day - 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. For more information call 824-3215
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	<p><i>* There are no Peer Group Meetings this month. Watch for future Peer groups to be announced.</i></p> <p><i>**If you have been a CASA for 2 years or more and would like to learn how you can become a mentor, please contact your CASA Coordinator. Volunteer mentors are not required to be assigned a case. This has recently been changed.</i></p>			

Reporting of Reasonable Efforts in Court Reports

When addressing reasonable efforts in the CASA court report, examine the case plan that CPS has developed for the family. Take a look at progress made in fulfilling case plan goals and address barriers and obstacles to achievement of goals. Assess the level and types of services CPS is providing to parents and children. Remember, reasonable efforts apply to CPS, not to parents. While you are reporting parents' performance of case plan tasks, this sections pertains specifically to CPS and the standard to which they have to uphold.

If you don't think CPS has made reasonable efforts, provide information about services that are not being offered or state specifically the reason for your determination. If you do think CPS has made reasonable efforts, state why you think so.

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 requires that "reasonable efforts" be made to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their families. When Child Protective Services (CPS) does remove children from their families, they must make efforts to find permanence for these children, either by reunifying them safely with their families or finding them another home. Contact your coordinator if you have questions.

REMINDER:

Contact logs are due the 15th of every month. In August we will be reviewing all volunteers' submission of logs and training hours. Please make an effort to get this information in. This is part of the volunteer contract you all signed when taking a case. Per policy, coordinators should have contact with volunteers at least once a month. You don't always have to wait for them to call you — pick up the phone and call your coordinator and bring them up to date on your case. They'd be happy to hear from you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Nick Nichols	2		
Janet Oitzman	2		
Bonita Facciotti	6	Judith Johnson	14
Jane Huff	8	Angela Barriga	14
Joyce Herron	9	Mary Ann Stringer	14
Jean Davis	10	Lori Sipple	14
Sharon Dunn	12	Margaret Larsen	20
		Beverly Burch	20
		Mary Schmidt	21
		Frances Dishmon	31



ICWA and ASFA

With the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997, Congress re-emphasized the need to focus attention on the safety and well being of children who are placed or at-risk of being placed in foster care. Testimony provided to Congress suggested that in some cases children were in foster care for overly long periods of time or were shuffled from placement to placement without ever finding a permanent home. Congress' response was to enact federal policies under ASFA that would bring more attention to finding permanent homes for children placed in substitute care and do this in a shorter amount of time.

While the debate in Congress had a general focus on children in the child welfare system, Indian children received little specific attention regarding the policies under ASFA that were being discussed in spite of their unique circumstances. About half of the Indian children in the United States are served by tribal child welfare programs and not by states which the ASFA targets. In addition, Indian children have a unique political status not afforded other children as members of sovereign tribal governments. This political status, as well as the unfortunate and tragic history of biased treatment of Indian children and families under public and private child welfare systems, is the basis for the Indian Child Welfare Act. However, the ASFA did not specifically address how its provisions would interface with the Indian Child Welfare Act, principles of tribal sovereignty and jurisdictional and service delivery issues unique to Indian children.

The CASA office maintains a resource file containing documents that address ASFA and ICWA. Please contact your coordinator if you serve on a case with Indian children and are in need of more information.

F.Y.I.

The Maricopa County CASA Program is in the process of hiring two new coordinators, one each for the Durango and Mesa Facilities. Look for an introduction of the new coordinators in the September newsletter.

Maricopa County CASA Coordinator, Melissa Adomeit, has recently moved to the new CASA office in the Southeast Facility at 1810 S. Lewis Street, Suite 2034, in Mesa. You can still reach Melissa at 506-3935.

COMMENDATIONS

The Foster Care Review Board commended CASA **KATHY JORGENSEN** for her long-term commitment to the children and for the excellent overview she gave on her CASA case. Way to go Kathy!

CASA **LORI ROBERTS**, was commended by the Foster Care Review Board and the entire team on her case. The board was very impressed with the efforts that have gone into making sure the adoptive parents are properly supported in their adoption of the children. Keep up the good work Lori!

Foster Care Review Board commended CASA **LYNDA PEDERSON** and the respective case managers for their efforts in working together to provide both support and the appropriate level of care for all the children. Awesome job Lynda!

FAREWELL

Farewell and Thank you to MELANIE SCHUELE. We wish her luck with her move and new position.



CASA PROGRAM
Juvenile Court Center
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CASA volunteer Angela Ashley was recently selected to be the Maricopa County representative on the Board of the Arizona Council for CASA. This council is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization which raises funds for the Pima County CASA Program and serves the unmet needs of abused and neglected children who are wards of the State. The Council recently invited representatives from all 15 state-wide CASA programs to join their Board. Maricopa County is pleased to affiliate with this long-standing and well respected group of individuals who have been fund-raising since 1995.



THANKS to the 32 Maricopa County CASA volunteers who attended the Supreme Court Dependent Children's Services Statewide CASA/FCRB Conference in June. We appreciate your time and interest.



Mark your calendars now for Sunday, November 7, 1999, for the Annual CASA Picnic. Join CASAs and their assigned CASA kids for a day of fun at Margaret Hance Park. Festivities will begin at noon.